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Sámi Shamanism, Fishing Magic and Drum Symbolism

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Such was the impact of the Lutheran Church's conquest against the Sámi, the indigenous people of the Lapland, between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries that the Sámi noaidi drums which were tools used to assist the shaman in out-of-body journeys, trance, healing and divination, were sought after, collected and destroyed in their hundreds. The zones or borders painted on the drum head divide the instrument into cosmological zones or structures in which recordings portrayed as symbols were made of scenes related to hunting, fishing and trapping practices. Of the remaining drums found preserved in museums throughout Europe, researchers still face difficulties regarding the interpretation of complex intricate and artistic symbolism portrayed on the drum skins of particular drums where there are no records of ownership and interpretation of the drum content which is what this paper addresses.

Today, the indigenous people who live in the northernmost areas of Finland: Utsjoki, Inari, Enontekiö and parts of Sodankylä municipality are referred to as the Sámi/Saami:

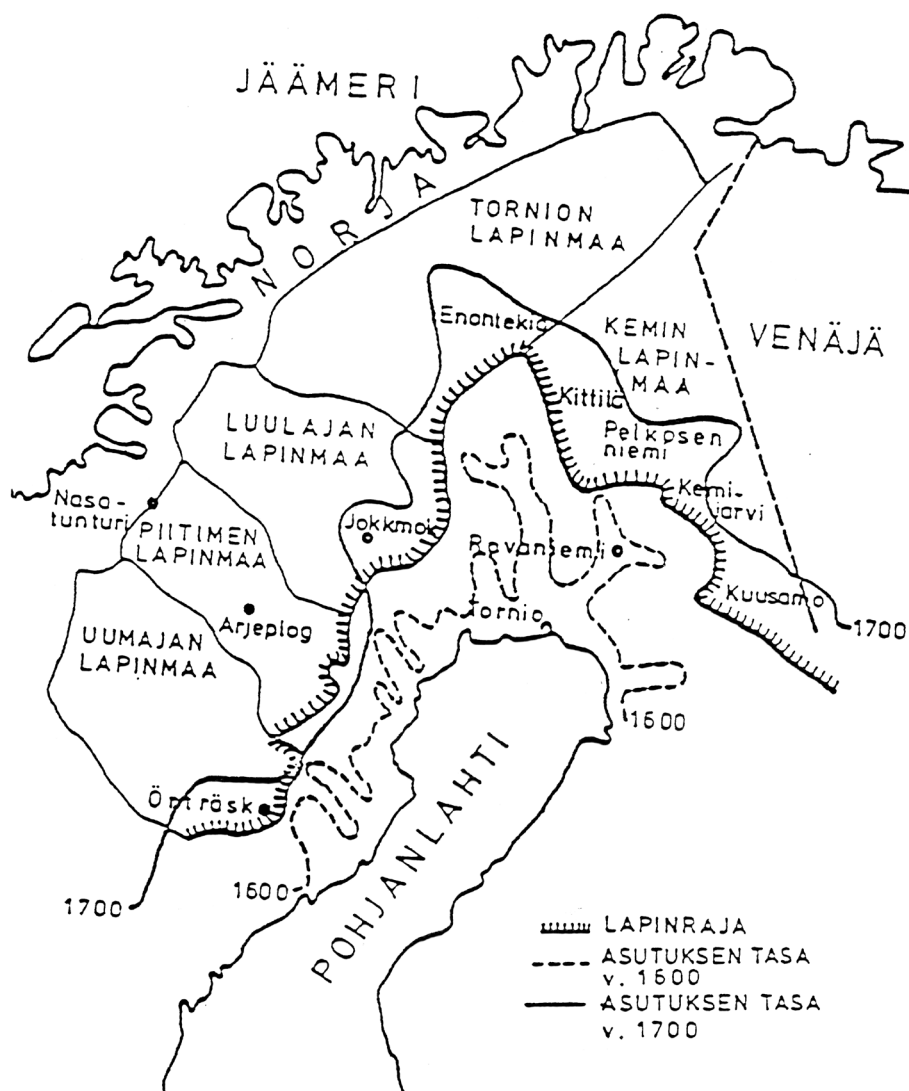
The present-day dwelling area of the Sámi (the Sámi region) extends from the northern parts of the Kola Peninsula in Russia to the north of Finland, Norway and Sweden, over both sides of the Kōlen mountains towards the south to Trondheim in Norway and Idre in Dalecarlia, Sweden. (Aikio et al. 1994: 50)

The Sámi Home Lands throughout Scandinavia are known as Sápmi, and these areas have within the past thirty years undergone significant change due to climate change and globalization, which have contributed to change locally. In modern society, many Sámi people run successful businesses through the service sector and modern working sector in general, as well as tourism enterprises which have helped accelerate certain developments within the culture. In many cases tourism is combined with other economic activities.

Traditionally, Sámi were hunters and fisherman peoples both on the lake and water ways as well as coastal areas around the Baltic and Arctic seas for at least the past nine thousand years. The Sámi are chiefly recognized today through their current occupations which are reindeer herding, hunting and fishing, and have their own language and culture. Wild reindeer hunting turned at some point in the past into reindeer pastoralism. In modern society, traditional society consists of reindeer, Siida and land, in which many elements of the old hunting culture can still be found.

Research into the history of the practice of shamanism amongst the Sámi in Lapland has drawn widespread interest from all major academic traditions, with regard to understanding the role and function of the *noaidi* in Sámi society, who is today referred to as the shaman. Extensive investigation based on accounts provided mainly by priests and missionaries involved in eradication of Sámi religion and religious practices throughout the four quarters of Lapland, has demonstrated why the *noaidi* and his/her drum was such a threat to the Swedish Church. For example, apart from the belief in a multitude of spirits and beings in different realities in which humanity co-existed, the drum was used as a tool for ecstatic enterprise by those who specialized in such a vocation. The presence of these two elements in Sámi society was in direct opposition to the worldview and doctrine of the church and state. The diversity of Sámi religion is encountered in the most comprehensive way through the paintings on the head of the *noaidi*'s magical drum. A typical drum served as a type of cognitive map on which the *noaidi* portrayed different aspects of both the physical and spiritual aspects of tradition and culture, exhibited through two distinct types of designs made from pine and spruce tree wood of which the forests of Lapland are abundant:

The frame-drums, *gievrie*, from the South Sámi area were made in an oval shape. . . . On the smooth skin [made from reindeer hide] the cosmos one inhabited was drawn or painted. On the back, the part of the drum that was turned towards the body, were hung different amulets of silver and brass, or pieces of bone and teeth from different animals. They gave the drum power and noise. . . . In the northern area the pine and spruce were also used, but there it was the boles and knots of the roots that formed the body of the drum. *Goabdes* or *meavrresgarri* are the names for these bowl-drums (Westman et al. 1999: 10).



Map. 1. A seventeenth-century map of Scandinavia showing the division of the northern parts of the Swedish Empire divided into the five Lappmarks. The map also shows the Lapland border: Lapinraja. The Lule area can be seen at the left (Luulajan Lapinmaa). The author of the map, and the place where it originated are not known.
Received with grateful assistance from Risto Pulkkinen (University of Helsinki).

An extensive explanation of a typical search for adequate materials for the building and construction of different drums is explained in the work of Swedish ethnographer Ernst Manker (1938):

It was not just in the shape of the drum but also in the pictures themselves that the southern and northern traditions were different. In the center of the frame-drum, the southern drum was a squared cross with four radiating lines which symbolized *Beaivi*, the sun and its power. Round the edges of the drum were then grouped the different pictures and figures. In the North Sámi areas they chose instead to divide the drum-skin into different “fields,” in layers: the upper, lower and middle worlds. . . . On the drums from the Central Sámi area the two traditions were combined. (Westman et al. 1999: 11)

The role and function of the *noaidi* in Sámi society was that of an inter-mediatory between the human world, animal kingdom and both male and female spirits. In the middle-physical world communication was sought between spirits who took up residence in boulders and rock formation on the landscape known in Sámi language as *Sieidi*. *Sieidi*, in certain cases portrayed human and animal like physical features, and were appeased through sacrificial offerings in relation to hunting where the drum was consulted as an oracle through divination. A second and what might be considered as more dangerous vocation was the task of making out-of-body journeys and liaising and negotiating with the ruling spirits and occupants in the world of the dead, for example, for the recovery and healing of sick and injured persons who has lost their souls. Each *noaidi* was said to possess a number of guardian or helping spirits:

The helping-spirits were animals with whose assistance the *noaidi* could make his soul journeys, and the protective-spirits were dead relatives who could aid him with advice. . . . He could use . . . [the drum] to help his community in times of crisis, but he could also use it for his own purpose, both good and bad. (Westman et al. 1999: 13)

Communication was also established with the Varalden and Rádien families who were higher spirits in the upper or celestial world. Sacrifices were often made to both of these spirits “. . . to obtain luck in reindeer herding, and to slow down the coming of the end of the world” (Helander-Renvall 2005: 20). In addition to the use of the drum for divination by the Sámi *noaidi*, rhythmic chanting in the form of *yoik*-

ing has also been a practice which has contributed to the inducement of trance when shamanizing and healing. The themes embodied by the *noaidi* when yoiking are consistent with those of animals for example: reindeer, wolf, bear, dog; and special place in nature such as rivers, trees boulders, to which lyrics were sung in the form of stories related to the landscape and hunting.

Activities such as these noted above were interpreted as allegiance to the Christian Devil by the priests of the northern districts in Lapland who, therefore, sought to eradicate Sámi religious practices through corporal punishment and death sentences to those who refused to give up their native religion and convert to the ways of the church. During this cultural upheaval and the drive by the apostils of the Church of the majority populations, the Christian belief system was subsequently administered throughout Lapland via high taxation and destruction and confiscation of hundreds of *noaidi*-shaman drums, during the colonialism period, which were collected and burned by the priests.

Such was the consequence and response to the loss of Sámi culture caused the arrival of Christianity in Lapland that some three hundred years after the first drums were collected, examinations of symbols and figures from amongst the surviving “71 drums” (Itkonen 1943–4: 68) to be found in the archives and display cases of museums throughout Europe, has been extensive. This is a way that both the Sami themselves and also scholarly research have tried to understand and interpret the culture of their ancestors. Each of these drums is found in Britain, Italy, France, Denmark, Germany and Sweden, and tell their own stories of a hunting, fishing and trapping culture which translated a relationship with nature into art. Close observation of the content of many drum heads shows many Christian symbols and figures such as Jesus Christ, Mary and other biblical characters and metaphors that are present. These symbols reflect the reality of the enforcement of an imported religion upon a nature religion. Birgitta Berglund informs us that:

On occasion the Saami tried to fit their drum to the Christian religion. As Rydving (1995: 161–2) has shown this does not mean that the religions of the Saami and the Christians were mixed. The reason was to make the drum more harmless and thus avoid punishment. The reason why the missionaries collected the drums was [because of] their reputation as the most important witchcraft tool that the Saami had. (Berglund 2005: 137)

Research into literature from the colonialism period has to some degree helped scholars in their understanding how important the drum was for the Sámi and also the crucial role it played in helping to structure Sámi society and worldview. However, because much of the information about the use of the drum and study of the pictorial events on the drum head was compiled through a number of unreliable sources provided by people from outside Sámi culture, namely, the priests and missionaries; a fair amount of ambiguity exists regarding translations of figures and symbols, their contexts, meanings and interpretations by persons who collected the drums, and even the Sámi themselves. Additional evidence supporting this reality is described by Sámi historian Veli-Pekka Lehtola who makes reference to:

. . . the violent changes in connection with Christian missionizing in the 1600s and 1700, [whereby] most of the symbolism of the *noaidi* drums was lost; [and because of this] it is difficult to reconstruct completely, the old world-view from sources written by outsiders. (Lehtola 2002: 28)

The use and application of language in the form of songs in Sámi society in relation to culture and identity has played a major role in narrative and oral transmission of cultural history and cosmology throughout antiquity which includes songs used during hunting and fishing, as well as the re-enactment of cultural myths, during reindeer herding, life cycle rites, healing and journeys to the realm of the dead. In Sámi society, everyone has participated in the singing which was passed down from generation to generation. It may also be said that the use of the *yoik* has been instrumental in the inducement of trance, the use and application of magic in cooperation with the use of the drum.

During the *noaidi*'s ritual activity, the yoiking which is a form of narrative was used to help cast a spell, enchant or bewitch a person or animal or direct punishment to a thief to make him pay for his actions. The songs and their content were not features Christian priests conceived as being important, because by association, with the use of the drum and inducement into a shamanic trance, the songs were seen by the church to be used for the practice of malevolent magic and conjuring up the Devil as Norwegian scholar Rune Hagen reports:

Christians immersed in demonological concepts of shamanism believed that Satan himself gave these drums to the Sámi. The drum, an instrument of the

Devil, enabled a sorcerer to summon his demons, which were believed to reside in it and were revived by striking it . . . the witches of Lapland were known to cast their evil spells across vast distances. Their spells could even be carried upon the northern winds to provoke illnesses among people far to the south in Europe. (Hagen 2006: 626)

Therefore, the yoiking was just as despised by the priests as the drums were and because of,

. . . this connection to the Sámis' pre-Christian religion [it] is also the reason why the Sámi yoik has been banished from schools in Sámi areas all the way up to the present. (Solbakk 2007: 11)

From observation, the yoik has at least two recognisable dimensions to it, the first is singing to help establish an altered state of consciousness and the second is how the *noaidi* sings about his calling of the spirits and out of body travelling to other dimensions. Another important point is that scholarly research shows that one of the very early ways Sámi pre-Christian religion is also evident throughout the Nordic countries is through rock carving and rock paintings, especially in Finland where some paintings are thought to be 7,000 years old. Scenes of trance, flying, out-of-body travel and interactions with spirits and animals painted on rocks and boulders share many parallels with symbols painted on *noaidi* drums.

All the surviving Sámi *noaidi* drums are decorated with a range of symbolism which is complex and varied with the exception of those which have faded because of their age. The pictorial content of the original versions were painted with red dye from alder tree bark which had been boiled or chewed before usage:

The red colour of alder bark, symbolizing blood [is a substance which was utilized as a medium that acted as] a key to control the elements. (Mulik and Bayliss-Smith 2006: 60)

The red colour of alder dye also had religious significance for hunting, and was seen through the deity who is called:

. . . *Leaibealmmái*—the alder tree man [who] was the God of Hunting. The alder tree was regarded as a sacred tree. With dyes made from the bark, the

people painted figures on the *goavddis*—drum. *Leaibealmmái* had control over the wild animals of the woods. (Solbakk 2007: 34–5)

Aims of the Research

In 2010, the author conducted an investigation into a number of publication errors relating to symbols and figures on a selection Sámi *noaidi* drums which were collected by priests and missionaries during the Witch hysteria era from between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries in Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian Lapland (see Joy 2011). The careful study was for the purpose of being able to rectify the ways in which Sámi religion and culture in Lapland has been portrayed and therefore, interpreted such as the relationship of the *noaidi* to the spirits which was recorded as information representing metaphors and combined features of sacred narratives belonging to an oral tradition that spanned thousands of years.

As a further study to what the author has carried out previously, the proposed research in this paper has two aims which are as follows. The first task is an attempt to fill in a number of gaps in previous research which examine the role of the art of a Sámi *noaidi* within the context of sacrificial activities in relation to the pictorial content of a drum (number 63 from Manker's 1938 inventory) that has its origins in the Lule Lappmark area of Swedish Lapland which is located close to the border with Finland, and has survived the colonialism period. Lule has been a significant place of interest for scholarly research into Sámi history with regard to the campaign of the Church. According to Norwegian scholar Håkan Rydving:

Parts of the Lule Saami areas were for a long time looked upon as “the most heathen” by the ecclesiastical authorities. It was the religious situation in the northeastern part of the Lule Saami area which dominated the debate in Swedish Parliament of 1738–1739 and resulted in the establishment of an official state agency for ecclesiastical work among the Saami. (Rydving 1995: 23–4)

Analysis herein is undertaken through an investigation into the decorative symbolism painted on the drum head, with regard to defining the overall context of the art, which as will be demonstrated, relates to a portrait of fishing magic exhibited through the way the owner of the

drum perceives the nature of reality and relates to the world. Before-hand, and as a way of acknowledging the need for the relevant ethical considerations during research involving culturally sensitive material, which is in this instance are the drums figures. The author takes into account the holistic worldview or perspective on reality which coincides with approaches used when involved in research into indigenous artifacts and culture. The way ethical considerations are followed herein is by giving recognition to the importance of relating to the data within “the practice of Indigeneity as a ‘whole system’ . . .” (Jonsson 2011: 103). Through comprehension of the nature and context of the research material in relation to shamanism and Sámi art, it is imperative that “all aspects of life, both tangible and Intangible [are understood, and furthermore, how these] are interconnected and cannot be separated from one another” (Jonsson 2011: 103). Emphasizing these points helps to clarify the approach and methods used and how they relate to the research material under investigation. Only by placing the data within a holistic worldview; it is then possible to gain a wider interpretation of the content and nature of events that are under examination. By contrast, previous research undertaken into the drum in question by Manker (1938) and Gustav Klemm (1894) has not allowed for the possibility of holistic interpretation of events on the drum head which means that the spiritual aspect has quite often been falsified, denied or misunderstood, especially by the clergy.

The focus of the research is directed towards strengthening contextual evidence which through interpretation of the activity painted on the drum head interprets the related events as being associated with a portrait concerning the use of power to secure a successful outcome for catching fish. This intention is expressed artistically by the drums owner at some time prior to engaging in fishing, trapping and hunting activities. By associating the artistic content of the overall scene, with Sieidi spirit involvement which is also portrayed in the picture, a number of parallels appear to become evident which the author makes clear, thus supporting the theory of the use of magic. Being able to identify what these parallels are demonstrates their significant meaning and value in the wider picture, and can be placed within the content of activities of the *noaidi*, who from an evaluation of the structures in the symbols on the drum, has extensive knowledge of magical practices which could be associated with a type of fishing narrative in relation to the fishing and perhaps the coastal Sámi. The drum presented in the

research is one of “the remaining 71” (Itkonen 1943–4: 68) Sámi *noaidi* drums collected by priests and missionaries.

The motivation for presenting an alternative explanation in addition to what has already been presented concerning the events on the head of the drum through previous research by Manker and Klemm, and what might give further support to alternate theories, is that within the field of the study of religions, if we link religion and religious art together which also includes magic, the term “Dynamism” becomes applicable to magical art within this context. Dynamism is a scientific word which loosely defined means it seeks to explain:

. . . a universal, immanent force or energy underlying—either logically or chronologically—all religious (and/or magical) beliefs and practices. [It is believed] that dynamism at its earliest, religion comprised a belief in a multitude of supernatural, personal beings with whom human beings interacted. (Alles 1987: 527–31).

A second applicable description of how this force is encountered for example in relation to the *noaidi*’s interaction with the Sieidi sacrificial boulders is found in a description by Sámi researcher Elina Helander-Renvall, who uses the term “Animism” in relation to how human persons relate to their environment. Moreover, an animistic perception of the use and direction of power is seen depicted on the drum head whereby in relation to inter-species communication and the creation of ritual art:

It is important to understand the role and function of the landscape and certain places and features within the landscape in specific areas. This is because within these places, communication, and what will be referred to as mythic discourse, takes place between humans and non-humans, and this dialogue is known to benefit human beings in their daily lives and activities. (Helander-Renvall 2009: 1)¹

Finally, the worship of natural features on the landscape that hosted supernatural powers as well as the beings who resided in the mythical underworld called *Säiva* can be traced as far back as the Neolithic age in Finland where pre-historic rock paintings are located. These powers were not comprehended through the concept of linear time as

¹ Scenes from this discourse has in the past been painted on the drum heads.

is the case in the Christian worldview, but the movements and shifts within nature were encountered as a cyclical chain of events. Therefore, this concept of time and space with regard to cosmology, structure, positioning and thinking, and presentation of an indigenous cultures religious symbolism differs remarkably from how religious symbolism is presented and analyzed in Western schools of thought, which is how the research was conducted by and large by priests. Another main reason for these differences is that in Sámi culture the *noaidi* when viewed as an artist have “. . . organized their experiences of the world into narratives” (Moen 2006: 4). This type of organization seems evident through the illustrations on the head of drum number 63 (see figs. 1, a, b, c, 2, 3).

The second aim in the research is concerned with Sámi Cosmology and seeks to bring to light, evidence to what is perceived as a loss of culture and worldview in relation to the author's recognition of the absence of the water element and related content, such as fish, water birds, and other animals on the heads of the remaining drums which have survived the Christian purges (see the chapter below: “What Studying Drum Number 63 Has Revealed about Sámi Shamanism and Cosmology?”). These observations have been made by making comparisons with drums that have a high content of reindeer, moose, bears and snakes for example, and explains the theories behind how the destruction of hundreds of drums has contributed to this loss from amongst the coastal of fishing Sámi.

The Material of the Study, Approaches Used and Previous Interpretations

The pictorial content of the drum under investigation is recorded in Manker's monumental work (1938; 1950). The book which is a collection of the surviving drums and ethnographical inventory which describes each one, how the different types were made and “. . . their individual history in addition to typologies, and origins and description . . .” (Joy 2011: 117). The instrument which is catalogued as:

. . . number 63, is a bowl type drum made from birch wood is currently the property of The Ethnographical Museum of Dresden, Germany (Museum für Völkerkunde Dresden); the drums history can be traced back to 1668. (Manker 1938: 780–1)

Information about the drum is very fragmented as is described by Manker, and there is no indication as to who owned it and what it was used for, other than the artistic content on the drum head. A description of all the individual figures on the painted skin is given by Manker (1950):

Manker's second publication discusses, in addition, the positioning of painted human, animal and divine figures, trying to illustrate how the Sámi world-view was presented and how it varied considerably, firstly by region and area; and secondly, according to the *noaidi*'s experience and interaction with the spirits in these zones and the way in which this was then documented on the drum which served as a kind of Cosmological Map prior to and during hunting. (Joy 2011: 117)

The author's analysis of the drum and the methodological approach is kept within the context of a local study in relation to narrative-story telling, and is applicable because narrative is a common theme associated with shamanism and mythical discourse, which relates to the events that are presented through the pictorial content on the drum head. The main focus of the analysis of the drum symbolism is focused, firstly on a bird like figure located inside a light or Sun symbol at the center of the drum head. The bird in this instance is an unusual feature. From observations, the animal appears to be interacting with a spirit residing in a Sieidi sacrificial boulder, which is positioned on a border area between the water and land. In this case the border area separating the land from the water or the middle world from the lower one is defined by a mythical line that transverses across the drum head. Quite often, certain deities took residence in Sieidi boulders, which were appeased and subsequently sacrificed to by the *noaidi*. Manker has also documented these spirits in his 1938 edition.

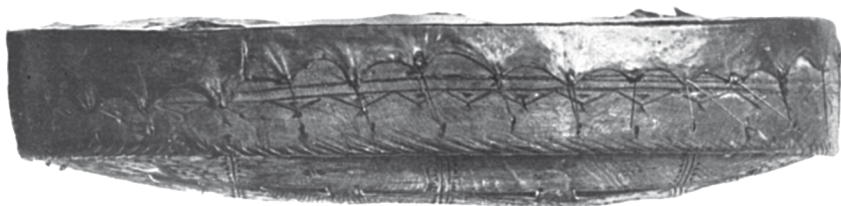
To support the investigation, included submitted in the paper are two illustrations as pictorial evidence that are sketching's of the original drum. The purpose for using the drawings instead of photographs for this particular study is because the original black and white photographs presented in Manker's 1938 edition are very faded and not reliable or suitable for presentation, and it is very difficult to make out the images. On both of the sketched illustrations (fig. 2 is from the 1938 edition and fig. 3 is from the 1950 edition), the content is somewhat clearer and portrays the drums symbolism more transparently, showing a significant number of fish and water birds in both sections of the drum, as well as Jamma Aimu, the world of the dead which is characterized by crosses.

There are some slight variations between the two drawings of the bird in the center of the sun in each picture. Regardless, the main focus for the study is to examine the relationship between the bird figure in the Sun symbol and the lines and structures in which fish and water birds appear to be encased or captured-trapped. The use of the material in this format helps with attempting to present a wider interpretation of the significance of the events through the use of narrative, as an overall explanation in relation to the content of what could be described as a rare account, portraying magical activity by presented through the Sámi *noaidi*'s art. The positioning of the birds have proven earlier, as Manker has stated, to be something of a mystery with reference to the roles they are playing, as well as their relevance on the drum head.

Earlier theories presented by Manker and Klemm which appear as straight forward and logical given the ethnographical approach used. However, and as will be emphasized, the content of the whole picture have to be interpreted from a broader perspective when considering the role of oral narrative and magic featured in hunting epics in Sámi society. Manker refers to the bird in the sun symbol as "a sacrificial animal, Klemm thinks it is a human and Edgar Reuterskiöld says it cannot be known" (Manker 1938: 411), which provoke further points of interest for the discussion.

A Portrait of Sámi Magic or Something Else?

A study of the material below has revealed that drum number 63 is the only drum photographed and documented in Manker's inventory which is portraying a large number of fish. The instrument and its content has a strong and recurrent theme with water and the features are encountered through what initially looks like a type of portal observed via a membranous layer of some kind, where fish and water birds are connected together as if trapped or under selection by means of a spell, influence or enchantment. The presence of this unusual web-like structure seems like it could be a representation of a circuit of power in the scenery; suggesting a type of magical interaction with the water element and fishing and can be observed within the content of the lower section on the head of drum. Rydving (1995: 62) believes the drum "probably belonged to a hunter or fisherman."





Figs. 1 *a* (top left), *b* (below left) and *c* (above top), are photographs of bowl drum number 63 from Lule when viewed from different angles. The illustrations on the skin of the drum head are barely visible. On the rear and side profiles of the drum, the attachment of the reindeer hide to the birch frame can be seen and also the decorative patterns that have been cut out to give the drum its own character and signature. These photographs have been added for the benefit of the reader so the extent of the fadedness and condition of the skin is evident; giving proof as to why it is not possible to refer to the original illustrations in this case (after Manker 1938: 782–3).

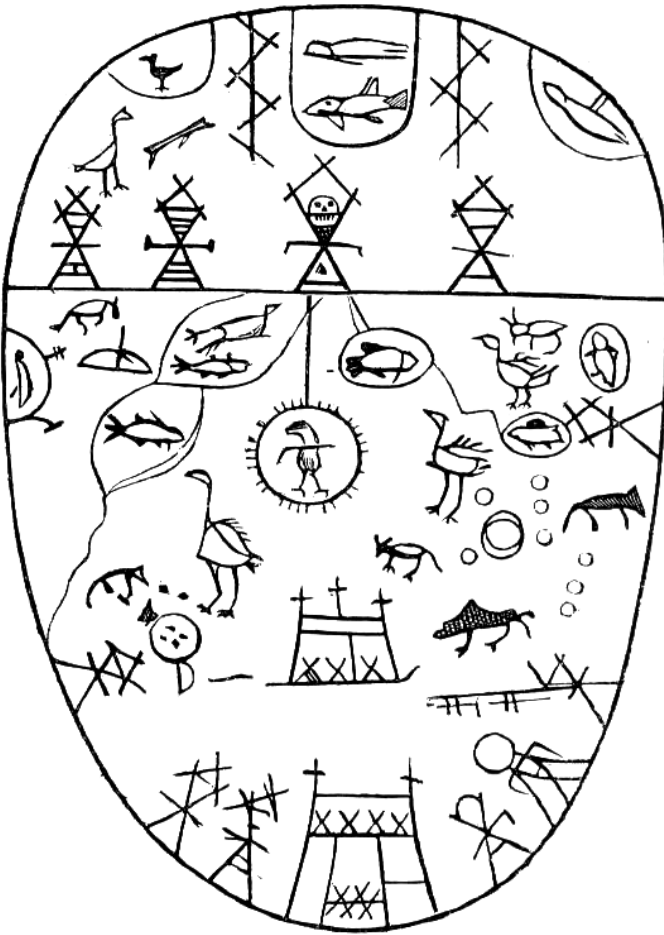


Fig. 2. From Mankær's (1938: 60) inventory drum number 63. The bird like figure is evident in the Sun-light as are the net like strands which surround the fish and birds. A Sun symbol in this location appears unusual, but it may well be associated with Săiva, the mythological underworld of the Sámi. Quite often, the *noaidi* summoned a Săiva bird to help him, with his out-of-body journeys, and this encounter often took place in a tunnel, portal or opening from which spiritual light from the mythical world of Săiva was visible. In the upper section in the third structure from the left, a spirit figure is visible in a sacrificial boulder that appears to have a link with the bird in the Sun motif.

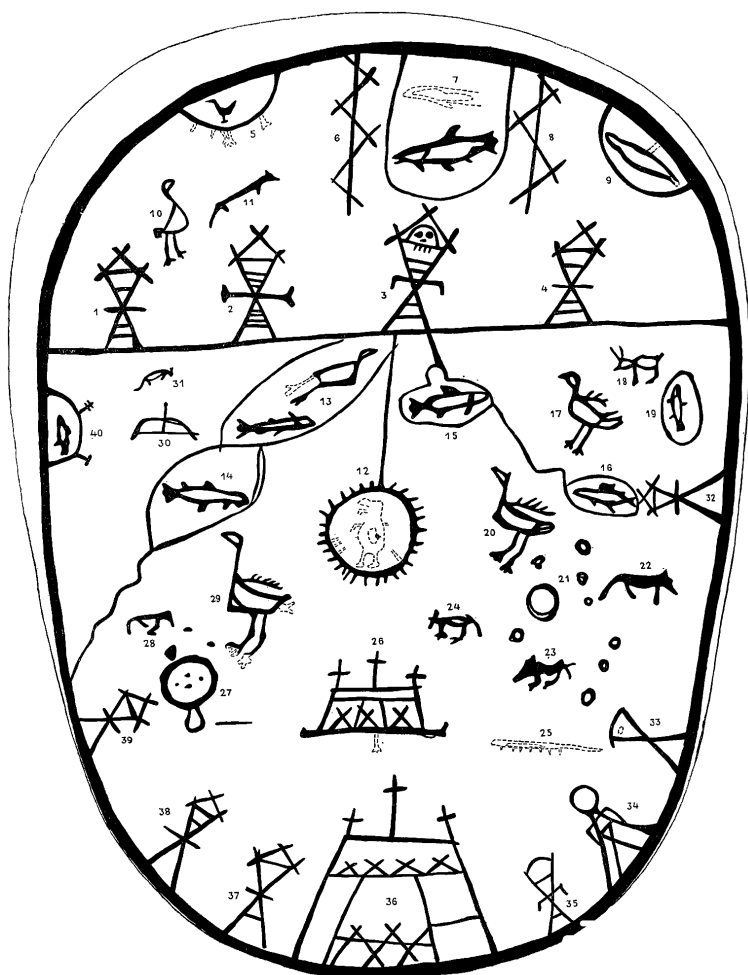


Fig. 3. Drum number 63 taken from Manker's second volume (1950: 410), where each figure on the drum head is numbered. There are clearly some discrepancies between the two figures in the Sun symbol; this image could be compared to a spirit figure which characterizes an animal with human features and this is not an unusual occurrence found in shamanic phenomenon, as spiritual birds may have some features that are human-like.

The content of drum number 63 is interesting by contrast to the other 70 drums in Manker's inventory which still have skins on them, mainly because of the number of fish present in the top and upper section of the middle zone. What appears unique about the imagery of the black and white illustrations on the two sketching's is the instrument has perhaps one or two reindeer images in view, and the rest of the layout and positioning of other animal figures are can be associated with water. Therefore, the content which consists mostly of a mixture of fish and water birds informs us how the drum can be primarily linked with river-lake or the coastal area where fishing and trapping were prevalent.

Another significant feature in the center of the instrument is what appears as the sun-like symbol with bird type figure inside it, distinguishable by its legs and feet. The bird figure gives the impression as if it has been drawn in such a way that there are the human features of two arms present across its body, and clawed feet, which makes an interesting point because it is not usual to see this type of image located in the middle of the Sámi *noaidi* drum in the rhomb or sun symbol, if this is what it represents. Typically, it is more common to find a reindeer in the center of the symbol as a representation of "Beaivi or Beaivvás the Sun [who] is one of the most important spirits or gods of the Sámi" (Helander-Renvall 2009: 5), but there is no evidence to suggest that Beaivi is portrayed here with what look like the features of a bird. Instead, it is probable the bird figure is associated with the mythical world of Săiva.

Furthermore, the image could be suggesting the bird is a representation of a diver or something similar, making it an intriguing illustration in this location because the diver bird in such a form could be indicative of one of the helping spirits associated with the Sámi *noaidi* and his work. Moreover, birds are known to have associations with the symbolic descent from the physical world by swimming down to the mythical underworld of the Săiva people to reach them and visa versa. For this reason, the image could be placed into the category where it is portrayed as that of a bird who has been summoned from Săiva to help the *noaidi* perform his work. In Sámi society, establishing contact with the mythical Săiva people from the lower or underworld is known to have been important for helping to secure success with fishing and trapping, as some of the pictures on the drum head are indicative of. The Săiva people were considered to have supernatural abilities as ancestral beings and spirits who helped the *noaidi* where necessary.

If the lower section of the drum is examined closely, we can see that one of the contributory factors for this type of journey was because the souls of the fish and birds were understood to reside in the Săiva realm, and therefore, contact was made with the supernatural powers located there through sacrifice and magic to help influence events during fishing and trapping to ensure a favorable outcome.

To give additional support to this theory, the use of spirit birds as helping allies of the *noaidi* in Lapland is well known, and is mentioned by Lars-Levi Laestadius in his *Fragments of Lappish Mythology* where the shaman had an “. . . underworld bird, sorcery bird” (Laestadius 2002: 210–11). A more recent contribution from a source found in another publication is provided by Sámi scholar John T. Solbakk (2007: 25) who gives a description from what is described as a typical shamanic séance where the Sámi *noaidi*, at the start of the shamanizing “. . . called his *noaideloddi* (*noaidi* bird)” whose job is to go and bring the *noaidi*’s helping spirits from the world of the dead (Săiva) to assist him with the task ahead. It appears too that birds are found as a common feature as helping spirits of shaman’s as Mircea Eliade (2004: 479) informs us how in many cultures and in certain ritual events “the symbolism of magical flight [and] two important mythical motifs [that] have contributed to give it its present structure [are] the mythical image of the soul in the form of a bird and the idea of birds as psychopomps,” and this adds a further point of interest for the narrative due to the fact that birds are associated with both the upper and lower regions of the cosmos in the shamanic worldview. However, and according to Finnish scholar Risto Pulkkinen, “the Saami shaman did not act as a psychopomp, a conductor of the soul of a dead person to the next world, which was generally one of the functions of the shaman in Siberia (Pulkkinen et al. 2005: 387). If this is the case, it means the Sámi *noaidi* would not have undertaken the role of psychopomp in the guise of a bird.

Giving further consideration to the above, what the image of the bird in its present location on the drum head is indicative of, is in addition to the connection between the spirit in the Sieidi, in the top section of the drum, third from the left, and the line which runs vertical below joining the sun symbol with the bird inside it together, the symbolism of the image offers a further explanation. The picture seems as a typical portrait showing the co-operation between the Sámi *noaidi* and the spiritual being whose joint effort is helping to secure the fish and birds as food sources. Through the projection of magical power, in a similar

way to how lightening descends, to both render the fish and birds helpless or to direct them through manipulation towards the *noaidi* in some way which he will be able to catch them.

My theory when placed alongside the earlier interpretation by Klemm and Manker's, presents a wider interpretation whereby the illustrated events in one sense confirm a trapping scene taking place, but the very essence of the content might illuminate a mythical–narrative story of the *noaidi*'s soul's journey into the world of the souls of animals to communicate with them. A narrative activity found the world over in shamanic cultures, when there is a need to secure luck in the search for food. In helping to give support for determining the latter, this type of narrative of travelling between worlds, has in a similar fashion, been recognized at rock art locations previously where sacrificial acts have been performed (Joy 2007).

Given the fact a type of sun symbol with a bird figure inside it is located in the center between the two lines, demonstrates to us how the bird has a central role in orchestrating the events taking place in the spiritual realm with assistance from the Sieidi spirit whose power helps secure success in the hunt before these actions become apparent in the physical reality sometime after. The bird could also represent an alter ego of a *noaidi*, and simultaneously also a bird ancestor, *lodde-máddu*, or 'a soul of the prey'. Sámi believe that animals/birds/frogs have a *máddu* (soul) of their own. The bird within the Sun in this sense would be a spirit who helps a *noaidi* to spirit travel in a safe way and gives him/her information to secure successful fishing and hunting.

Concerning the line formation in the lower zone of the drum which has several circular structures to it; initial observation gives the description of what resembles a type of net or something similar. In Manker's (1950) edition, Manker refers to Klemm's interpretation of events on the drum head at the point in the top section where the lines meet and the spirit figure whose face is visible in the third structure from the left as being "the god in the picture [who] has a human face and a link to the *Noaidi*, and is a symbol of a link to the magical world" (Manker 1950: 409–11). This for me would seem like a reasonable interpretation.

However, what Klemm also refers to with regard to the circular structures containing the fish and water birds, is clearly visible in the picture and has a further explanation consistent with sorcery. Klemm's

interpretation of the lines is they are “water lines-lines of the river” (Manker 1950: 409–11).²

My understanding of the events taking place and the interpretation of the lines circling around the game animals is they are symbolic representations of strands of magical energy-power sometimes referred to as *mana*; and *mana* has associations both with spiritual beings and their powers as well as human beings who have strong magical abilities, such as the shaman or witch. Through closer observation and given the fact the lines appear to originate from directly below the Sieidi spirit, which according to Manker, “judging by the double hammer-like arms, [might represent] the Thunder god Tiermes. . . . Reuterskiöld’s reference to figure 3 is Thor” (Manker 1950: 409). With the summoning of electrical power the lines then descend into the lower section of the drum but not the top section; the two lines below can in a physical sense be associated with the way the water flows indeed as Klemm suggests. However, a more holistic explanation is these rapids or currents had value and purpose beneficial to the *noaidi* when directing/summoning magical power to capture prey and perform trapping techniques, as water also has associations with shape-shifting in mythical cultures. Furthermore, the spirits at the edge of the water were known to travel from Săiva into the physical reality when summoned by the *noaidi* through sacrificial offering, and some Sieidi sacrificial places were believed to be entrances to this mythical realm.

Giving further consideration to these new interpretations, the imagery on the drum is an indication of a person who as Rydving (1995: 62) has suggested, “. . . [the instrument] probably belonged to a hunter and fisherman,” but someone who was also a *noaidi* as well, and whose skills in magic are presented in what appears as a rare and unusual narrative-portrait of events. Through the illustrations we see how the focus is directed towards the mythical underworld and the utilization and harnessing of the power of water in addition to the assistance of the Sieidi spirit for trapping luck. The work of the *noaidi* when viewed in this sense is that with the assistance of the bird spirit and Sieidi, he

² There is no mention of Klemm in the bibliography in the book, but in Manker’s (1950) volume, the following reference to Klemm is found “Klemm, Gustav, 1894. Allgemeine cultur-Geschichte der Menschheit III Leipzig.” Also, in Johannes Schefferus’s accounts in chapter on the Gods of the Sámi (1674: 40; 1971: 37–45), he discusses three main ones, Thor, the Sun and Storkjunker.

used magic to “. . . capture the soul of the prey and led it to the hunting ground of his people” (Pulkkinen et al. 2005: 388).

A further point of interest with regard to the type of phenomenon on *noaidi* drums from Lapland is the association with *Säiva*, the mythical world which was sometimes portrayed upside down. In the upper section of the drum head there are three birds and a fish inside a structure similar to the ones in the lower section, but there are no lines associated with these as is the case with the fish and birds below in the lower section. On the drum at the right side in the top section a bird is pictured upside down.

Another question needs to be asked here as to whether or not this animal is associated with one of the *Säiva* animals in the mythical underworld of the Sámi, as it remains something of a mystery but, and has been described by Pulkkinen, according to sacrificial offerings which were made to the spirits in this region. The “sacrifices to the *Säiva* spirits were made upside down . . .” (Pulkkinen et al. 2005: 375), because they mirrored the world below. A further development with regard to the significance of those animals in the top section of the drum positioned up above the *seita* spirit is they have had a soul counterpart in the heavenly realm as well, as it is not uncommon either in shamanic cultures that the duality of the soul has existed, and in this way some birds have mythical counterparts in the upper or celestial region of the cosmos too.

At this point, it seems important to ask the question as to why there are so few drums which can be recognized as belonging to the sea-coastal or fishing Sámi by origin in Manker’s inventory which show wider aspects of fishing and trapping practices where the presence of water is as strong. This is by comparison to those drums through which the content is consistent with reindeer herding and hunting of land animals and the mythic stories and portraits symbolizing interaction with reindeer herding, pastoralism and the tundra?

What also has value and is important to try and piece together within the portrait on the head of drum number 63, is the coastal-fishing Sámi made widespread use of the sacrificial fishing *Seidi* boulders’ to secure luck for fishing at the beginning of the spring and autumn seasons when the hunting and trapping time commenced, on occasions as a substitute for the drum. In the picture, what the images of these sacrificial platforms or *Seidi* formations actually reveal to us is two different

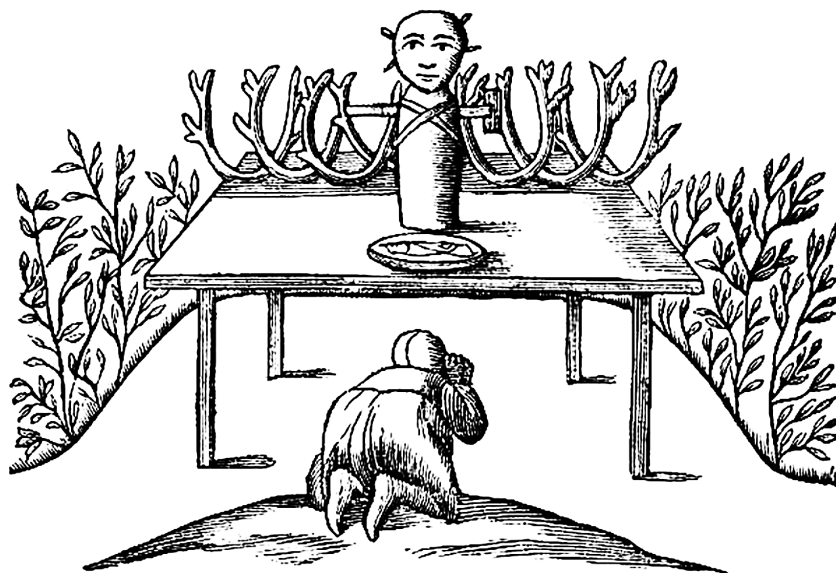


Fig. 4. An illustration taken from Johannes Schefferus's *The History of Lapland* (for a more comprehensive description visit: <http://old.no/samidrum/lapponia/illustrations.html>), which shows a table that has been constructed from wood. Sieidi boulders were both natural formations on the landscape as well as made from wood. Many wooden *seita* figures were situated by the water.

aspects of the same sacrificial tradition. This is visible where the use of the drum is indicated through the *noaidi*'s journey in trance down under the water with assistance from the bird, to capture the souls of the game and these he has documented on the head of his drum, and also the interaction and possible role of the Sieidi which looks as if it is supplying power to help the *noaidi* in his task.

When this portrait of events is given further consideration in addition to the involvement of the Sieidi spirit, we see how the process is intricately woven together through the use of magic and what might appear as the application of certain visualization techniques often depicted in out-of-body shamanic spirit journeys. Although Sieidi worship is linked with securing a successful outcome in fishing, trapping and hunting matters, the drum in Sámi society has primarily been used as an instrument for trance, but as noted above, also widely used for divination when needed, especially when seeking out food sources.

Furthermore, the practice of shamanism amongst the Sámi was not only linked to drum usage. Sieidi worship has been a common form of shamanic communication where at times, the *noaidi* used singing and chanting (yoiking) to induce trance or ecstatic possession on certain occasions as the act of shamanizing was reinforced and then executed by making sacrificial offerings to the spirit who resided in the boulder or the Sieidi in the form of a wooden post. In all cases, the activity was a way to acquire power for making spirit journeys, through the application of rituals associated with hunting, fishing and trapping where the *noaidi* agreed to share the catch with the resident of the boulder or by covering the boulder with fat and blood beforehand as a way of feeding it and establishing contact with it. This is why many families in Lapland have at one time in the past had their own private Sieidi which also protected the members of the family and their property and the spirit was summoned to help with hunting and other tasks, when needed.

In helping to determine the latter further, the presence of the bird in the sun symbol, as well as the presence of the Sieidi spirit, and the lines encapsulating the fish; all of these three elements portray the main structures for making not only narrative possible, but also an act of magic. In each case, transcending time and space, thus showing not only how the picture illustrates the location and position in the inner and outer worlds of the person who decorated the drum head, but, a real life fishing-trapping drama-epic taking place which appears to have dimensions to it both above and below the landscape. The nature of the events pictured are commonplace within magical cultures and societies where the practice of shamanism has been used during hunting and fishing activities which are also intimately linked to narrative and mythic stories.

Another point that has relevance for this part of the discussion is if we look back on reflection at the early literature written about the Sámi and involvement with water and animals from this realm, the earliest recorded account of a drum which bears any significance of the Sámi *noaidi*'s relations to animal powers who reside in the water and the presence of the concept of narrative, this is provided through a description of the interaction with water in the:

. . . oldest document that describes a shamanistic séance, [and is from] the eleventh-century *Historia Norvegiae*; the markings on the drum are mentioned as containing only figures representing whales, a harnessed reindeer, skies and a boat with oars. They have been interpreted as representing the means of trans-

port for the shaman [*noaidi*] on his journeys or his spiritual assistants (whales). (Pulkkinen et al. 2005: 73)

The content of this account reveals that water animals-mammals have carried much importance much earlier for the coastal-sea Sámi.

It should be added too, that what is viewed as an act of magic within the overall content of the drum head, is within the top section at the center is the spirit or god type of figure on the sacrificial platform or wooden structure which is located close enough to the edge of the water is important to acknowledge as well, because the zones or border areas where the land meets water are known for being important focal points and meeting places for the Sámi *noaidi* and the spirits. In other words, these areas are where earth, heaven and water meet. Moreover, these areas were understood as transitional points where sacrifice was made in particular which in turn helped to influence events so the spirits power could help yield a successful outcome as might be the case here. This is why many Sieidi boulders and rock paintings are found located at the edge of lakes and rivers, between the worlds figuratively speaking. Throughout Lapland is has been widely known that through the use of magical practices amongst the Sámi:

. . . the desired affect is conceived as of being obtained mechanically by the correct performance of a particular procedure, for example, the casting of a spell. (Pulkkinen et al. 2005: 39)

Of the remaining drums, number 63 is one which appears to have this type of content portrayed on it.

In addition to analysis of the figures and interpretation of the events taking place on the head of drum number 63, a further discussion with regard to Sámi cosmology is included below. The purpose of this text is to highlight how the pictures on the drum head also has a similar landscape features which has been a part of cultural identity to the *noaidi*'s of Lapland for hundreds if not thousands of years, which is portrayed through the relationship to ancient culture that had strong ties to water. In this case, the Sieidi's and similar figures in rock paintings which are located at the water's edge in Finland.

The illustrations in fig. 4 above has a similar theme to it as is seen on head of drum number 63 except there is no visible evidence of the direction or currents of power coming from the Sieidi-spirit figure in

the center of the table who is surrounded by reindeer antlers. The fish offering is clear though in this case which symbolizes an act of sacrifice.

It appears that the literature which has been written with regard to sacrificial activities and Sieidi worship in some sources (e.g. Schefferus 1674; Holmberg 1964), lacks the kind of holistic understanding and interactions between the human and spiritual realms, as seems evident through the content depicted on the drum head. One of the reasons for this lack of knowledge is because the illustration on fig. 4 above, which was given to Schefferus, was one of two images of the Lule Sámi engaged in the sacrificial act and was drawn by Samuel Rheen who was a Swedish clergyman and ethnographer. Rheen, whose Christian worldview varied considerably from that of his counterpart, the *noaidi*, whereby, there was no understanding or experience of the realm of the supernatural. The priests were for the most, lacking in knowledge and understanding with reference to their comprehension of the animistic nature of the Sámi holistic worldview which was cyclical, as has been explained above. A further point and one that has additional value in bringing this discussion to a close is within the content of the drum head, as I have already mentioned, we are presented with a rare insight and account of the use of magical power by the Sámi *noaidi* and to some extent how this works with reference to hunting, fishing and trapping practices in this individual case. Therefore, and for the most, the essence of witchcraft-shamanism and the use of benevolent magic taking place is captured through the pictures on drum number 63, portraying the finer details of how magic is used in this case to achieve its means.

Evidence from both the segmental and the bowl types of drums shows extensively how the pictographs and figures on the instruments have helped the Sámi form their visual culture through their relationship to water and the landscape. Water has been of the utmost importance for helping to define zones and mythical borders between the physical reality, sky and the lower worlds of *Säiva* and *Jabma Aimo*, and using such motifs as: boats, Sieidi structures, fish and water birds to represent these. There is additional evidence the Sámi drum pictures from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are intimately linked with rock paintings too because there are many parallel symbols and figures between the two types of art. In the case of the Skolt Sámi from the Kola Peninsula from the Russian north, there are similarities between the contents of rock carvings and paintings. One could argue how these symbols are part of a chain, which links present to the past; a formation

of structures that were only known to, and comprehended by Arctic cultures, and these were the primary symbols used in the transmission of culture from one generation to the next. Moreover, in prehistory when the rock paintings and carvings were created, the east and western directions (axis) appear to have had a broader significance in the worldview from that time because of the role and function water played.

The Finnish scholar Anna-Leena Siikala (2000: 129) notifies us that “mythic traditions have been slow to change; they carry the voices of the past to the present day.” Furthermore,

. . . the most basic fundamental areas of cultural consciousness are related to the community’s worldview and basic values; mythology is constructed as a representation of precisely such basic structures of consciousness. (Siikala 2000: 127)

For the most, water appears to have two main dimensions or levels to it, the first is the necessity of food for survival in the physical realm where for example, fish, game birds, seals and beavers that were hunted for their skins, dwell, and then the second and much deeper dimension was the myths surrounding the *noaidi*’s excursions to the land of the dead: Jabma Aimo, and Săiva the mythic underworld. Apart from being located at the bottom of the lakes these realms were furthermore characterised by an island or cave beneath the water or in a mountain, lake, river and sea where mediation between the *noaidi* and the spirits took place in times of need. “The water route leading to the other world, particularly the land of the dead, may be a feature shared by all Uralic groups” (Siikala 2000: 132), and another common feature from ancient Sámi culture which is evident in the coastal areas where the Sámi have lived at one time and affirms the significance of water in relation to the dead are where stone burial cairns can be found.

It is important to acknowledge these points, because the mythical lines painted on drum heads marked the border between the living and the departed. The choosing of the locations for the creation of rock carvings and paintings are also significant because the sites are mostly found close to the shorelines of lakes and rivers throughout the Nordic countries and Sámi areas in the Russian north, also affirming the concept of a mythical line between worlds. When Christianity began to influence the way people were buried after death, a transition occurred from the edge of the waterway which was substituted and directed towards the church yard (inland), it may well be that some of the drums

show this whilst other do not, as in many cases, the place of the dead is located in the south on the drum head number 63.

At the site of the Taatsi Sieidi (pl. 1) in Mounio in western Lapland where there are no rock paintings, and also at Hossa in Värrikallio in northern Karelia, Finland (pl. 2), where there are many rock paintings, additional evidence of Sieidi sacrificial boulders resembling human and animal faces and profiles have been found at the water's edge. In both cases ancient rites of sacrifice and hunting activities are evident directed towards water as are cosmological structures in the decorative art.

What Studying Drum Number 63 Has Revealed about Sámi Shamanism and Cosmology?

Before embarking upon further discussion concerning Sámi shaman drums with regard to Sámi cosmology and sacred narrative, it is beneficial at this point to inform the reader how the next section in the article is intended to highlight one of the missing gaps in research into Sámi cultural history. The way this has been done is by presenting the findings from recent observations which have become apparent through analysis of a number of sources previously published about the Sámi shaman drums and Sámi culture. My intention is to build on previous claims that a comprehension of a shared or fixed unified cosmology as well as a common religious belief system (Rydving 1991: 28–51) amongst the Sámi is not immediately evident in relation to fishing activities when considering what has been written about the *noaidi* drums and the drum symbolism from the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries. According to the *Cultural Encyclopaedia* of the Sámi:

Cosmology is the name given to the total complex of mythological concepts explaining the structure of the universe (cosmography), its origins (cosmogony) and its end (eschatology). Cosmology comprises myths concerning the origins of natural and cultural phenomena and of man's relations to them and mythical concepts explaining the interaction between man and the cosmos. (Pulkkinen et al. 2005: 53)

On the other hand, according to another definition:

Sámi mythology is a local expression of a larger pattern of ideas, knowledge, beliefs, rituals, legends and symbols. Many myths are connected to shamanism. According to the Sámi worldview, nature and the entire world are alive. This explains the existence of many spirits and divine beings. These spirits reflect the consciousness, creativity and purpose of the cosmic world that we live in. The drum symbols tell a lot about the Sámi worldview. (Helander-Renvall 2009: 3)

From within the artistic context of Sámi history, of both drum symbolism and rock paintings each of these mythic discourses are governed by the artistic symbols and lines on the drums dividing the content into zones or segments. These lines help give meaning and structure to the drum head in a similar way to how the ancestors of the Sámi who made the rock paintings, have related to their environment and expressed their relationship between the culture and nature. The decorative symbols and zones on the Sámi *noaidi* drum make up a complex form of networks that link many aspects and dimensions of the physical and spiritual realities from a distant and more recent past together. A good example of the variation of material is seen through drum number 63, the content of which is unlike any other drum where the events appear to transcend time and space.

Within this context, reference is made outlining the importance of the relationship between the pictorial content of Sámi *noaidi* drums and rock paintings and sacrificial Sieidi stones with regard to visions and out-of-body journeys. As emphasised above, it is known that the Sámi relied extensively on assistance from Sieidi spirits who resided in boulder and rock formations close to rivers and lakes, which were often, appeased for help with fishing and trapping luck. By contrast, the absence of, in particular, hunting scenes related to water from the majority of the surviving drums may indicate what could be regarded as missing pieces of historical information. This information concerns the lack of a wider understanding in relation to how, on many of the existing drum heads, there appears to be a deficiency of the types activities and related symbolism representing the close ties with the water element and fishing activities. Bringing this point to the attention of the reader within this chapter is for the purpose of highlighting how the locations of many sacrificial boulders and almost all the rock paintings in Finland are located close to water, and what this actually tells us? It tells us that reliance of Sieidi has been documented for example by Schefferus (1674) and Laestadius (2002), but yet, if Sieidi worship and

sacrificial activities have also played a significant role and function in Sámi society and worldview in relation to narrative and story-telling and fishing and trapping activities there appears to be a large gap in pictorial art with regard to these events painted on the heads of the remaining drums.

For example, the appearance of such a diverse number of symbols of reindeer, moose, bears, beaver, foxes, wolves and martens, depicted on the remaining Sámi *noaidi* drums, as well as the presence of moose and reindeer that are recognizable in rock paintings suggest the following. These symbols indicate the influence and status these particular animals had amongst the forest and mountain Sámi by comparison to the needs and lifestyle of the Sámi who lived by the waterways and coastal regions.

With such variations like the ones presented by the animals on the drums, it may be argued that it is not immediately evident the Sámi have shared a unified cosmology in the past, but the structure and focus for their religion and cosmology was dependent on where the ruling spirits lived and functioned in relation to the relationship to the landscape, sacrificial traditions, ancestral relations, previous myths and cultural conditioning. It is by acknowledging the possible absence of iconography which is related to the fishing Sámi who lived close to the waterways, and their worldview, by comparison to the worldview of the Sámi who lived in the forests and travelled the tundra, it might be possible interpret this as a loss of traditional knowledge and culture in relation to colonialism.

In Manker's (1938) inventory of the remaining drums, a number of variations within the different types are evident and seen in the different processes involved in construction as well as drum symbolism which mostly depict animals such as reindeer, bears, wolves, foxes, moose and a variety of water birds that have similar representations to each other in their locations. These animals can be found on travel routes and within the oral history associated to a greater extent with inland hunting. With the exception of a few, many of the remaining drums and their cosmological content show the importance of the north-south connection which is typically longer in design than the east-west pathway to the horizon. This of course, is also by comparison and when contrasted for example, to the drums of the southern Sámi which indicate the importance and indeed vertical significance of stellar and lunar observance as central themes in their totemic understanding of the influence of zodiac-animal signs and their positioning in the heavens. These are

depicted through hunting myths associated with different star constellations and cosmology, as well as the spiritual beings that dwelt in Săiva. These signs in the heavens appear to have been influential in the way animals were painted on the drum heads in their respective locations.

Typically, in the center of many of the surviving drums are symbols representing the four directions. We can see how the four directions, not just north and south (the vertical points) have been important and have an equal place in Sámi cosmology and worldview. However, it seems that when describing the *noaidi*'s journeys to meet the spirits of the middle world on the horizontal axis (east-west), which would be consistent with activities around the rivers and lakes with regard to fishing and trapping, the contrast in content is lacking significantly by contrast to the vertical axis.

These aspects of the Sámi worldview portrayed on the drums does provide a fair amount of information about the vertical aspects of Sámi cosmology but not the horizontal ones, because the focus has been in most cases the study of the Sámi *noaidi*'s journey from north to south and visa-versa.

Another indication as to why a wider representation of the interaction with water element and fishing is not portrayed as one of the central themes in Sámi cosmology on the drum heads with reference to the symbolism which supports this hypothesis, is the drums that once belonged to the fishing Sámi and which I am suggesting is a crucial piece of information missing here, is presented by Juha Pentikăinen in his research into the *noaidi* divination drums from Lapland:

A greater collection of drums was sent by Von Western to Copenhagen where, however, about 70 of them were burned in a fire in 1728. (Pentikăinen 1998: 34)

As I understand it, Thomas Von Western was instrumental in converting the coastal Sámi of Norway and Sweden to Christianity. Therefore, during these events, in addition to the hundreds of drums which were burned before the fire in Copenhagen, and those which were hidden in the forests as Sámi religion went underground, it would be conceivable as to why there are so few drums portraying a similar level of ritual symbolism on them which is consistent with the worldview and activities associated with Sámi culture, fishing-trapping and the water element.

A further point of interest in this matter is in her research into the origins of Finnish shamanism undertaken by Siikala. She makes a clear distinction about the role, importance and function of water in early hunting cultures in the north:

I came to the conclusion that the oldest layer of religious imagery does not represent an Arctic but a subarctic culture, existing in the milieu of the northern “taiga” type. It was a culture, furthermore, in which waterways occupied a crucial role. (Siikala 2000: 130)

This, in addition is no less true for the Sámi and their cosmology. One of the elements which characterized sacrificial activities amongst the Sámi is the relationship with water and fishing–trapping, because the powers associated with it are considered to have been linked to the reciprocal relationship to the ancestors and spirits of the mythical underworld of *Säiva* and the powers who dwell there who features prominently in everyday life and activities:

The *saiva* lakes and mountains were inhabited by both human and animal beings. The names for the human inhabitants of the *saiva* in the old sources were *saiva olmah* (*saiva* men) and *saiva neidah* (*saiva* women). The *saiva* spirits selected, taught and empowered the Saami shaman (*Noaidi*). (Pulkkinen et al. 2005: 374)

What appears evident is that at some point during the middle ages, there may alternatively, have been some type of change where there was a shift inland from the coastal areas, and at the present time this is not fully understood. Having made this point, what could be the perceived loss of many drums belonging to the fishing and coastal Sámi man have relevance for what might be a piece of crucial historical information which is missing, where the fragments of Sámi cosmology have disappeared.

Concluding Remarks

I have attempted to show that passing underwater has been one of the main activities for gaining access to and from other realities which exist outside of time and space within Sámi culture. All the elements and animals in ancient culture associated with the watery realm have been of key importance in both a material as well as spiritual sense. The

pictorial events on the head of drum number 63 has demonstrated that fishing magic may have been used in order to secure quarry through inter-species communication, and the role Sieidi stones and their indwelling spirits have played. Yet, a wider context of this phenomenon is by and large missing from Sámi pictorial art on drum heads where fishing is concerned.

The use of magic by the Sámi, whether benign or malevolent, contributed to the Witch hysteria that spread throughout Europe throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Most of the documentation about the use of magic has come from priests and church records, through which the culture has been represented. This information has not been reliable in many cases, but in the case of drum number 63 the interpretation of the scenes depicted on the head of this drum, based on what little has been known previously from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, has sought to provide a more comprehensive interpretation and insight into the use of what appears as benevolent magic by the historical and elusive Sámi *noaidi* from this time. Furthermore, if the lines on the drum head which surround the fish and water birds were on their own without the presence of the bird in the Sun type of symbol, then Klemm's interpretation would have been more convincing. But, and because of the location of the bird with its human like features and its connection to the spirit in the Sieidi stone, these characteristics and actions make a wider interpretation possible which could be shamanistic in their very essence.

Due to the brutal and sustained campaign against the Sámi by the Church, the events did in time, lead to the loss of Sámi traditional world-view, knowledge and cultural practices which resulted in a change of the traditional way of life that had been characterized by the relationship to the animal kingdom, hunting, fishing-trapping and natural world, and this is what the paper has attempted to bring to the attention of the reader.

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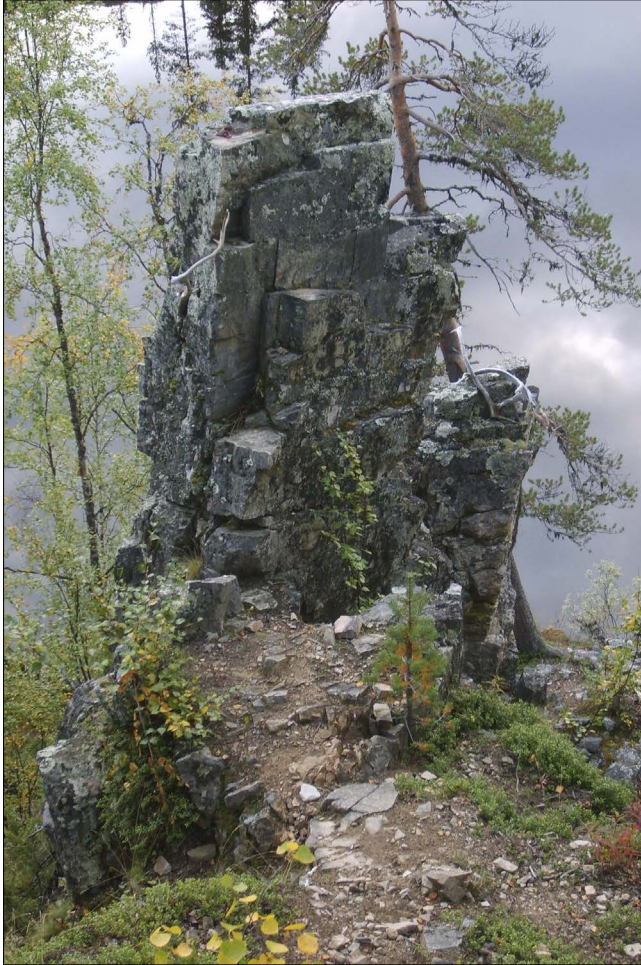
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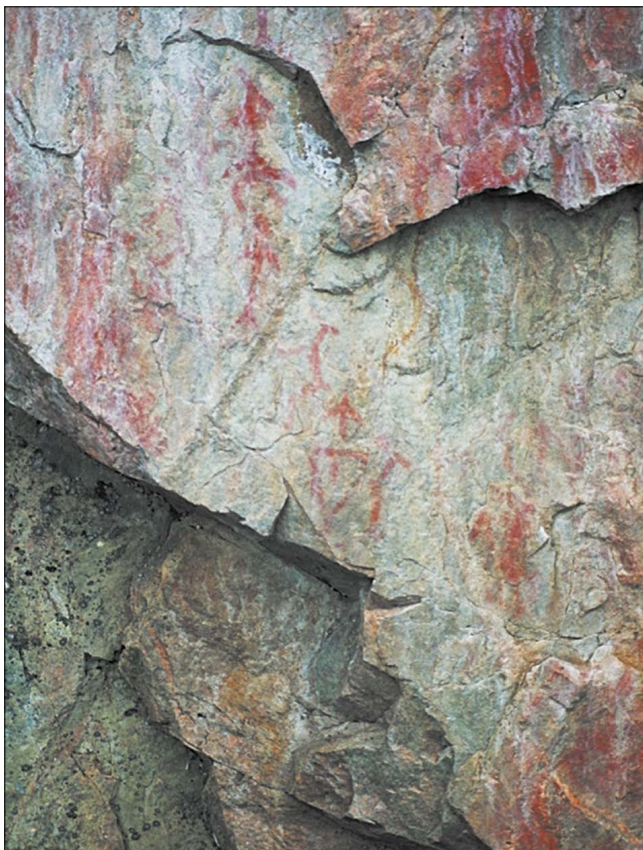
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1 The Taatsi Sieidi near Mounio in Western Lapland where reindeer antlers have been placed on the upper section on the left side just below top, the and also on the right side approximately half way up the Sieidi. The antlers are single ones which are white. In both cases, these provide important evidence of recent sacrificial offerings at the edge of the water.

Photograph: Francis Joy, 2011.



2 A portrait of a rock face just above the water line at Hossa-Colour Rock in northern Karelia, Finland, which shows fish-like humanoid figures in a chain formation ascending upward toward the north from the south. The early hunters drew on a combination substances mixed together to make the paint for rock art possible, including red ochre, animal fat, red dye from the alder tree (*leppä* in Finnish), and in some cases traces of blood have been found. These fish type figures identified at Hossa may well be connected to the realm of Säiva at the bottom of the lake. Reference to the dating of the rock paintings in present day Finland by archaeologist Anti Lahelma from the University of Helsinki propose: "to ca. 5000–1500 cal. B.C." (2005: 29).

Photograph: Francis Joy, 2006.